BACKGROUND

The idea to create a course design checklist for use at Washington State Community and Technical Colleges (CTCs) was conceived at the 2017 Quality Matters Coordinator (QMC) retreat sponsored by the Office of Educational Technology & Open Education at the Washington State Board for Community & Technical Colleges (SBCTC). During the retreat our group of dedicated eLearning professionals from CTCs across the state set a goal of defining the essential indicators of a well-designed online course. In order to allow our colleges the greatest amount of flexibility for adopting it, the group agreed that the checklist should contain the minimum foundational elements of a quality online course design plus best practices and exemplars that would allow room for growth and support a process of continuous course improvement. In addition to being open source and helping to reduce the costs of course review, the checklist was also to contain items of specific importance to Washington CTCs such as affordability of course materials; best practices for copyright, accessibility, and inclusion; and mechanisms for substantive and regular interaction. The Washington Course Design Checklist is an optional quality assurance tool and is not meant to replace the Quality Matters Rubric currently in use at many of our colleges, but rather to work with it as an additional and less expensive course review option. The purpose of this checklist is not to prescribe how one should teach, it's simply about maximizing the essential course design elements that contribute to the success of online students in our state.

DESIGN PROCESS

A small work group of volunteers, consisting of QM Coordinators from across the state, reviewed multiple course design rubric examples such as the 5th Edition QM Rubric, the original Public Domain version of the QM Rubric, the OSQCR Quality Scorecard, the CSU QOLT instrument, and several QM lite style rubrics from our system colleges. Upon completion of the rubric review phase the group began envisioning the initial **Version 1 (V1) draft** which was released to the system in 2018. With a desire for transparency, the group also **presented a session at the 2018 Washington Canvas Conference (WACC)** to gauge the interest level of faculty, staff, and instructional designers at WA CTC's. Over the next year, student and faculty feedback was collected during focus group style interviews. The feedback collected from those interviews was used to begin the revision process for **Version 2 (V2)** of the checklist. A follow-up presentation detailing observations from the student and faculty focus groups was **presented at the 2019 Washington Canvas Conference**

(WACC). Feedback from the 2019 instructional designer focus group interviews was used to finalize **Version 3 (V3)**. Look for another WA Checklist presentation at the upcoming WACC 2020 conference.

FORMAT & ORGANIZATION

The **Version 3 (V3)** release version (this version) of the checklist is currently housed in Google docs for ease of sharing but will be moved to a more accessible format soon.

The checklist is currently divided into 4 sections: Course Design, Outcomes & Objectives, Assessment & Feedback, and Materials & Tools. Each standard contains a set of indicators ranging from Essential, to Best Practice, to Exemplary. This format was chosen to allow course developers (faculty, staff, and instructional designers) room to grow.

Eventually, each standard will be accompanied by an informational "guides" page that provides additional support and explanation of the standard and its indicators. You can help us build a top-notch collection of teaching and learning resources by filling out our **checklist support resources form**. The checklist will also contain a glossary of definitions for quick reference and will be provided in a variety of useful formats yet to be determined. Development of state level training and a course review process is underway.

Contents

WA COURSE DESIGN CHECKLIST

SECTION 1 - COURSE DESIGN & STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Standard	Indicators
1.1 Course design welcomes and orients students to the purpose and structure of the course.	**Essential** ● A course syllabus containing clearly stated course policies and required institutional policies is easy to locate and download. ● A personalized introduction by the instructor is provided. ● Course landing page provides clearly stated instructions for how to get started. ● Students are asked to introduce themselves. **Best Practice** ● Course includes a "Start Here" module. ● Course includes a course orientation video. ● Course includes an opportunity for students to check their understanding of course start and orientation information. **Exemplary** ● Course includes an opportunity for students to share their personal learning needs privately with the instructor. ● Course includes opportunities for instructors to learn about students' history and lived experiences.

Standard	Indicators
1.2 Course navigation is clear and easy to use.	**Essential** ● Directions for navigating the course are clearly stated. ● All hyperlinks, files, videos, external URLs, and navigation menu items are working. **Best Practice** ● Excess/unused navigation links have been removed from the course navigation menu. ● Course design allows for content use across multiple devices, including mobile devices. **Exemplary** ● Course includes a video clearly explaining course navigation.
1.3 Course is logically organized.	**Essential** ● Course organization is clearly explained. ● Course content is organized in sequenced learning units. ● A schedule illustrating the typical weekly flow of the course is available. ● Due dates are clear and consistently stated throughout the course. **Best Practice** ● Naming conventions for learning units and assessments are clear. **Exemplary** ● Course content is sequenced, chunked, and scaffolded.

Standard	Indicators
1.4 Course design cultivates a sense of belonging.	**Essential** ● Course includes a statement about the value of equity, diversity, and inclusion. ● Course includes resources to connect students to a variety of student support and well-being services. ● Course includes a statement clearly outlining expectations for student interactions. ● Images and representations used throughout the course reflect diverse people and perspectives and/or the instructor acknowledges the lack of diversity and provides a forum to discuss representations and stereotypes. ● Students are provided opportunities to connect course content to their own lives and/or reflect on course content in relation to a variety of perspectives. **Best Practice** ● Humor and idioms used in the course are appropriate and adequately explained. ● Community-building activities include a statement about creating a positive and inclusive environment for interaction. ● Course includes at least one activity acknowledging the value of diverse student experiences and perspectives. ● Course content, activities, and instructor statements consistently demonstrate that inclusivity is valued in the course. **Exemplary** ● Students are provided opportunities to create or co-create assignments and artifacts in ways that connect course outcomes to their personal lives.

Standard	Indicators
	● Course includes two or more activities acknowledging the value of diverse student experiences and perspectives.
	● Students are allowed some flexibility with course scheduling and assignment deadlines.
	Indicators in this section are derivatives of the "Peralta Online Equity Rubric" by PCCD Office of Distance Education and Kevin Kelly, EdD is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Standard	Indicators
1.5 Course design engages students.	**Essential** ● Instructor has a clearly stated plan for regular and substantive interaction. ● Course design includes mechanisms that facilitate regular and substantive interaction between faculty and students. ● Instructor's communication and feedback policies are clearly stated. ● Course design incorporates at least one strategy for student engagement. **Best Practice** ● Course includes community building opportunities that allow students to build positive relationships with one another and with the instructor. ● Course design incorporates two or more strategies for student engagement. ● Course includes opportunities for students to reflect on their learning. ● Forms of communication and interaction address students with a range of language abilities and background. **Exemplary** ● Students are offered a choice of how to engage with course content, the instructor, and their classmates when appropriate. ● Students are provided opportunities to share their personal experiences. ● Students are asked to give feedback on the course design. ● Course incorporates three or more strategies for student engagement.

Standard	Indicators
1.6 Course includes clearly written directions for accessing technology help resources and setting up required course technologies.	**Essential** ● Course includes clear directions for accessing the Learning Management System (LMS) and other required materials, resources, software, and technologies. ● Students are provided with contact information for the institution's IT or eLearning offices and/or technology help desk. **Best Practice** ● Course includes clear directions for finding LMS help and help with other software and technologies required for the course. ● Course includes an opportunity or a link to an option for students to self-assess their readiness for online learning. **Exemplary** ● Students are provided with links to LMS and/or other software and technology help sheets, videos, or other help resources.

SECTION 2 - OUTCOMES & OBJECTIVES

Standard	Indicators
2.1 Course level outcomes are appropriate, specific, and measurable.	**Essential** ● Current institutionally required course level outcomes are included in the course. **Best Practice** ● Course level outcomes are clearly stated and written in easy to understand, student-friendly language. ● Course level outcomes reflect behaviors that can be seen or demonstrated. ● Course level outcomes are appropriate to the level of the course. ● Course level outcomes begin with an action verb. (will be folded into explanation of BP "objectives reflect behaviors …") **Exemplary** ● Course level outcomes are reinforced throughout the course, with concrete connections made to learning materials, activities, and assessments. ● Course level outcomes align with program level outcomes.
2.2 Module level objectives are appropriate, specific, and measurable.	**Essential** ● Module level objectives are clearly stated and written in easy to understand, student-friendly language. ● Module level objectives reflect behaviors that can be seen or demonstrated. ● Module level objectives are appropriate to the level of the course.

Standard	Indicators
	Best Practice ● Module level objectives begin with an action verb. <mark>(will be folded into explanation of Essential "objectives reflect behaviors …" and replaced with a new BP)</mark> **Exemplary** ● Module level objectives are written at multiple levels to scaffold skill mastery.
2.3 Module-level objectives are aligned to course level outcomes.	**Essential** ● The relationship (alignment) between course outcomes and module-level objectives is clearly explained. **Best Practice** ● The instructor has used a course map or another means of outlining course elements to align course-level outcomes and module-level objectives. **Exemplary** ● A course map or another means of understanding how course outcomes and module-level objectives are related is provided for students.

Standard	Indicators
3.1 Assessments are aligned to module-level objectives and course-level outcomes.	**Essential** ● Assessments measure the stated course-level outcomes. ● Assessments measure the stated module-level objectives. **Best Practice** ● The design of the assessments appropriately measures the module-level objectives and course-level outcomes. ● The instructor has used a course map or another means of outlining course elements to align assessments to course-level outcomes and module-level objectives. **Exemplary** ● A course map, or another means of understanding how course-level outcomes, module-level objectives, and assessments are related is provided for students.

Standard	Indicators
3.2 The purpose of and expectations for each assessment are clearly stated.	**Essential** ● Assessments include clearly written directions. ● The purpose of each assessment is clearly stated. ● Assessments include clear, consistent due dates. ● High-stakes assessments include a grading rubric or other descriptive scoring criteria that is shared with students prior to submission. ● Directions for high-stakes assessments include at least one example of finished student work or a worked example from the instructor. **Best Practice** ● Directions for high-stakes assessments include examples of multiple levels of finished student work. ● Permission to use student work is clearly documented. (will be moved to Section 4) **Exemplary** ● Directions for all assessments include examples of multiple levels of finished student work. ● All assessments include a grading rubric or other descriptive scoring criteria that is shared with students prior to submission.
3.3 A variety of assessment methods are used.	**Essential** ● Course includes a combination of self-assessment, diagnostic, formative, summative, performance, and/or authentic assessment opportunities. ● A balance of low risk/low stakes and high risk/high stakes assessments are used.

Standard	Indicators
	Best Practice ● Topic and format choices are offered to students as appropriate, allowing students to demonstrate learning in multiple ways. **Exemplary** ● Students are allowed to create their own demonstrations of learning by choosing the format and creating their own assignments.
3.4 Mechanisms for timely and constructive feedback are provided.	**Essential** ● Rubrics or other descriptive scoring criteria are used for grading. ● Instructor's plan for providing timely grading and feedback is clearly stated. ● Feedback is personalized and includes information about how students can improve. **Best Practice** ● Opportunities to receive personalized feedback from instructor on rough draft submissions are included. **Exemplary** ● Opportunities to receive personalized feedback from peers on rough draft submissions are included.

Standard	Indicators
4.1 Course content is aligned to assessments, outcomes, and objectives.	**Essential** ● The relationship (alignment) between learning materials, learning activities, assessments, course outcomes, and module-level objectives is clearly explained. ● Learning materials support the learning activities, assessments, course outcomes, and module-level objectives included in the course. **Best Practice** ● The instructor has used a course map or another means of outlining course elements to align course content with learning activities, assessments, course outcomes, and module-level objectives. **Exemplary** ● A course map or another means of understanding how course content and learning activities align with assessments, course outcomes, and module-level objectives, is provided for students.
4.2 Course content is current and includes a variety of instructional materials.	**Essential** ● Resources are current to the discipline and relevant to the course. ● Resources are provided in a variety of mediums/formats to support the needs of diverse learners. **Best Practice** ● Course content includes openly licensed and/or student created resources. **Exemplary**

Standard	Indicators
	● Course includes opportunities for students to explore beyond the required content and outcomes.
4.3 Use of course materials respects best practices for copyright.	**Essential** ● Sources including publications, graphs, charts, drawings, maps, tables, videos, and images are cited, clearly noting the title of the material, author, name of the collection (book, magazine, journal & website), page number (if available) with links to the original source (if available). ● Openly-licensed materials include an attribution that links to the original source and the license deed. **Best Practice** ● Sources including publications, graphs, charts, drawings, maps, tables, videos, and images are cited following the APA (6th edition or later) or MLA (8th edition or later) citation guide. ● Links to external websites include a title and explanatory description of the target website. ● No photo of a minor child is used, regardless of terms of use, without obtaining written consent from the parents or legal guardians. ● No extensive use of All Rights Reserved copyrighted materials is made without express permission from the author. **Exemplary** ● A citation and/or attribution page is provided with specific information on all materials adopted. ● Instructions are provided to students who wish to submit their work with an open license.
4.4 Course content is	**Essential**

Standard	Indicators
designed using best practices for accessible course design.	● Course includes a disability statement. ● Course includes resources or links to resources for obtaining accessibility support services. ● Course includes a statement detailing how students can obtain accessible formats of required course content and/or access alternative resources. ● Required course technologies are usable by as wide an audience as possible with appropriate alternatives provided. ● Headings are used to provide structure and aid navigation of learning management system (LMS) pages and documents. ● All text elements are real, readable text and not scanned images of text, SmartArt, WordArt, or screenshots of text. ● PDF text formatting includes tags (headers), logical read order, and searchable (real) text. ● Text is formatted using numbered/bulleted lists, columns, page breaks, appropriate font size, and sufficient color contrast. ● Images and other course graphics include contextualized alternative text or are marked as decorative. ● Table formatting includes a caption, header row and/or header column, and non-merged cells. ● Tables are not used for page layout or other page organization purposes. ● Videos and other media include accurate captions and/or transcripts that have been checked for/corrected to include proper punctuation and spelling.

Standard	Indicators
	● Descriptive hyperlinks are used to format URLs included in course documents and located on LMS pages.
	● No flashing images or seizure-inducing animations are used in the course.
	● Color alone is not used to convey meaning.
	Best Practice
	● Links to accessibility policies for external tools and publisher content are provided..
	● All media in the course can be stopped, paused, and controlled by the viewer.
	● Optional tools and materials are usable by as wide an audience as possible with appropriate alternatives provided.
	● Student viewable files and LMS pages have a medium, good, or excellent Ally score or pass a comparable accessibility check.
	Exemplary
	● Transcripts are provided for videos.
	● Descriptive audio is included for videos.
	● Instructions are provided to students for adding captions/transcripts and alt text to student-created and/or student-shared media.
	● Third party platforms, software, tools, or content has been evaluated for accessibility and documentation is available detailing if and how the materials meet WCAG 2.0AA.

Standard	Indicators
4.5 Cost of course materials is clearly noted.	**Essential** ● The approximate cost of required course materials is visibly noted in the course with links to the school bookstore or other purchasing websites. ● Optional and required materials are clearly distinguished. **Best Practice** ● Available links to free or lower cost materials that provide compatible course content are provided. **Exemplary** ● The approximate percentage of use for each material is clearly indicated in the syllabus. ● Students are invited to provide feedback on the use of each material and its cost.
4.6 Student data is protected.	**Essential** ● Links to college's privacy policies are provided to students. ● Course is designed to protect against unauthorized disclosure of non-directory student information. ● Photos in which students can be clearly identified are not used without the student's express permission. **Best Practice** ● Course design limits the number of external account creations required by students. ● Links to privacy policies for external tools and publisher content are provided as available. **Exemplary** ● All technology tools used in the course have been vetted to ensure they meet data privacy requirements.

Standard	Indicators
4.7 Course technologies are aligned with course learning activities and learning goals.	**Essential** ● Selected learning technologies support course learning activities, assessments, course level outcomes, and module-level objectives. **Best Practice26** ● The instructor has used a course map or another means of outlining course elements to align learning technologies to course content, learning activities, assessments, course outcomes, and module-level objectives. **Exemplary** ● A course map or another means of understanding how learning technologies align with course content, learning activities, assessments, course outcomes, and module-level objectives is provided for students.